



Milwaukee County

Supervisor John F. Weishan, Jr., 16th District

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TAKING THE BAIT

Letter from Supervisor Weishan responding to ICC comments on County government study

Milwaukee, WI – The Intergovernmental Cooperation Council of Milwaukee County (ICC) is a group of Mayors and Village Presidents that represent the 19 municipalities within Milwaukee County. At their February meeting, the Council was more than willing to take the bait and jump on the bandwagon of bashing Milwaukee County and the County Board. The ICC comments divert attention from the true issues facing Milwaukee County: increasing health care costs, stagnant state funding and the failures of County Executive Walker to fulfill his duties as the County's administrator.

Milwaukee County's municipal boundaries were constructed to meet the needs of industrial Milwaukee during the 1890's and early 1900's. Today, we have examples like West Allis (Allis Chalmers), West Milwaukee (Paulings & Harnischfeger P&H) and Cudahy (Patrick Cudahy) and other small municipalities. This, along with the anti-Milwaukee annexation hysteria of the 1950's, created cities like Greenfield, Franklin and Oak Creek, producing a fractured and complex system that is no longer capable of meeting the economic needs of our area for the 21st century.

I am not seeking the elimination of local units of government, but we do need cooperation from municipalities in addressing the true issues facing Milwaukee County. We should look at the successes of intra-regional cooperation, like what we have done with Emergency Medical Services (EMS), as a template to move forward. We must embrace the policy of countywide-shared services and disregard those looking to exploit our current situation for their own personal gain.

The ICC is letting Walker off the hook for his failures as County Executive and overlooking the efforts of the Milwaukee County Board to restore Walker's cuts to vital community services. Ignoring his obstructionist politics on stimulus funding does not serve the citizens of each municipality, or the region as a whole.

The overriding conclusion is that we need a strong, viable County to sell the entire region as part of the widely touted Milwaukee 7 group. Why would anyone want to consider this a region if all they continue to see is fragmented services, degrading infrastructure, and political leadership unwilling to lead?

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